



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Flathead
National Forest

1935 3rd Ave East
Kalispell, MT 59901

File Code: 5130

Date: July 31, 2007

Subject: Delegation of Authority, Brush Creek Wildland Fire

To: John Koehler, Incident Commander

We welcome you and your Team to the Brush Creek Fire and wish you a safe and successful assignment.

We hereby delegate authority for the management of the Brush Creek Wildland Fire incident to you as Incident Commander. This fire is burning on lands under the jurisdiction and/or protection responsibility of the Flathead National Forest (FNF) in Flathead County and the Northwest Land Office, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) in Lincoln County, Montana. The fire is also burning on lands owned by Plum Creek Timber Company (see attached map). Both Flathead and Lincoln Counties have responsibility for public safety and structural fire protection on private property and should be included in the incident management organization, strategic planning, and tactical activities as appropriate.

You will assume command of the incident from the current IC, Keith VanBroeke, upon change-of-operational periods at 0600 on Thursday, August 2, 2007. Brian Manning and Cathy Barbouletos, or their designated representatives, will be available for daily review of the WFSA. Your cost limitation for this incident is \$ 5,000,000. If during review and implementation of the selected alternative it appears the costs will exceed this amount, we will revisit the WFSA for approval by the Forest Supervisor and DNRC acting Libby Unit Manager.

Lisa Krueger, Tally Lake District Ranger, is the designated FNF agency representative for Cathy Barbouletos. In the event that Lisa is not available, Tally Lake AFMO, Manny Mendoza will act on her behalf. Dave Marsh, Forest Management Specialist is the designated DNRC representative for Brian Manning.

The principal objectives to be accomplished through your management of the Brush Creek Fire include:

1. Safety of firefighting personnel and the public is of greatest importance and will be the highest priority for the Flathead National Forest, DNRC, and your Team in developing strategy and implementing tactics. The Ten Standard Orders will be adhered to by every firefighter, without compromise. The Eighteen Watch-Out Situations must be evaluated and mitigated before any action is undertaken in the fire environment. Your Team is responsible to convey these requirements to all personnel in the incident

organization, to monitor compliance and document specific measures you take to ensure adherence to these safety standards. Any violation of the Standard Orders or failure to mitigate the Watch-Out Situations will also be documented, along with appropriate actions taken to correct and hold personnel accountable for their performance. We expect the incident commander to be personally committed to and involved in communicating this expectation and monitoring compliance in your organization.

2. We expect you and your team to implement a suppression strategy that utilizes both direct and indirect attack that limits fire spread west of the Brush Creek Divide between Flathead and Kootenai National Forests, and limits fire movement into the heavy timber fuel types in the Sheppard and Good Creek drainages. This strategy is anticipated to reach a maximum acreage of 20,500 acres. This alternative recognizes the need to check the fire's spread to the east, north, and west to protect private property, structures, and other valuable resources. In the event that this strategy cannot be achieved within the acreage target boundary or cost limitation, we will review and revise the suppression strategy.

3. Work-rest guidelines for wildland firefighters must be adhered to. The incident commander and the command and general staff will be personally involved in planning, implementing, and monitoring compliance to provide a 2-for-1 work-to-rest ratio. Documentation of actions taken to monitor work/rest cycles and to minimize any work shifts exceeding 16-hours in length will be provided, along with mitigation measures.

4. FNF considers minimum impact management tactics as the starting point for planning fire suppression activities in every case. Where opportunity allows, direct attack the fire edge utilizing the appropriate tactics to minimize fire spread. Night operations need to be justified relative to the values at risk and fully mitigated to insure fire fighter safety (please refer to the enclosed letter, "Guidelines for Fire Suppression in Lodgepole Pine and Mixed Conifer"). Do not drop retardant within 300 feet of streams or standing water, unless there is a threat to firefighter and/or public safety.

5. Coordinate with Flathead County's law enforcement and fire service area to take necessary steps to prevent the fire from threatening or burning structures. Assist Flathead County with implementing the existing Evacuation Plan.

6. Amy Jacobs and Beth Gardner are designated to represent the FNF as resource advisors to your Team. The resource advisor and any technical specialists representing the FNF should be included in your Team's operational planning and decision-making activities as well as provided unrestricted, but coordinated access to the fireline and incident facilities. Their recommendations will be based on valid land management direction and biological evaluations and should be applied or mitigated in each case.

7. Occupied grizzly bear habitat exists in the fire area. All incident activities must consider the presence of bears and minimizing conflicts resulting from human activities. When within the fire perimeter, all crews must follow the attached food storage order. The directions of that order must be followed to ensure all food and garbage is properly

stored and handled. You will make available to all incident personnel information regarding procedures for firefighters in grizzly bear habitat, available from the resource advisor.

8. Establish and monitor cost effective methods of accomplishing objectives as outlined in the WFSA

- a. Use Appendix D of the Appropriate Management Response document to record your cost decisions.
 - i. Attach Appendix D cost factor matrix, with decisions documented, to the daily review of the WFSA.
 - ii. Document specifics of the decisions in relation to the cost factors in the daily IC summary.
 - iii. Document in the 209 the significant issues for values at risk/cost factors (blocks 28 & 29).
 - iv. Validate the WFSA review and cost factor decisions daily with your Agency Administrators or designees.
 - v. Ensure rationale for decisions is crystal clear to minimize misinterpretation.
- b. Maintain total fire suppression costs within or below the 10 year average acre costs as identified in the WFSA. If costs cannot be maintained at or below those averages, document the reasons this cannot be accomplished and share this information with the IBA or designated Line Officer representative.
- c. Property and equipment accountability standards must be followed according to State policy for DNRC's jurisdiction. The loss tolerance ratio that you are directed to achieve for accountable property is no more than 6%. You are also expected to track miscellaneous fire equipment to ensure that items delivered to drop points or locations on the fire line are accounted for and not misplaced or lost. You are expected to track property loaned to cooperators and recover the property when the cooperator is demobilized from the incident.
- d. If the fire is expected to be a long duration event, work with the FNF/Region to develop a long term management plan that describes the values to be protected and at risk from the fire, how managers can best protect those values in a safe and cost effective manner, and hold the fire area to the boundary of the selected suppression strategy. The plan should follow the format for the Stage III of the Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP).

9. Utilize the Forest Incident Business Management Guide to assist with business management decisions. For clarification or interpretation of any items contact the FNF

Incident Business Advisor (IBA) Darlene Mullins, and DNRC Incident Business Advisor, Barb Powell.

10. The Incident Management Team will be responsible for initial attack within the temporary flight restriction (TFR) set up for the Brush Creek fire. The Team will also be asked to support initial and extended attack with resources as requested and available, recognizing that successful initial attack is the top priority in the Northern Rockies after firefighter and public safety.

11. Personnel assigned to this incident must be sensitive to local residents by respecting individuals, private property and public interests. Your Team should utilize local services, vendors and contractors to support incident requirements as much as possible.

12. Precautions must be taken to prevent the introduction and subsequent spread of noxious weeds. This includes the pre-treatment and post-treatment of vehicles and helicopters utilized to support the incident. Specific to the FNF only, the FNF has implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS). As part of the EMS operational controls (conservation measures) for Fire Suppression, Fire Use, and Invasive Weeds Significant Aspect document (ISO 4.4.6) will be implemented to reduce the potential for noxious weed establishment and spread into the fire area.

- a. Off-Forest vehicles and equipment that will be used on forest roads or on the fireline will be cleaned at check-in and upon release from the incident. The cleaning shall consist of removing all dirt and plant parts from the equipment (including undercarriage) that may carry noxious weed seeds before entering the fire area. A weed washing log will be used to track the implementation of this conservation measure.
- b. All cargo nets used in sling load operation will be inspected for plant parts at time of service check at the helibase and dirt and plant parts removed before use. A Net Inspection Log is used to track the progress of this operation.
- c. The IMT Helibases touchdown pad and cargo area will be free of noxious weed flowering heads or cleaned of noxious weed flowering heads when such areas are established, or when practical. The IMT helibase(s) includes any existing helibases on a unit used during the fire incident or helibases established at the ICP.

Reference: Significant Aspect: Fire Suppression and Wildland Fire Use and Impact on Invasive Weeds Procedures, Operational Controls, Responsibilities, and Monitoring R1 National Forest/Grassland. Contact Linh Hoang (FNF, SO) or Rick Stevens/Pat VanEimeren (HHRD) for additional information.

13. Media relations and public information management may be provided on-scene, but coordination with the FNF should occur through regular contact by your Team with Teresa Wenum, Acting Forest PIO, or Ema Braunberger in her absence.

14. The FNF and DNRC encourage you to provide training opportunities to personnel assigned or available to this incident to assist in maintaining a well-qualified fire management workforce.

15. Rehabilitate fire suppression related damages in a timely manner. (Resource advisors from the protection/jurisdictional Agency(s) will be available to assist with this

planning.) FNF will assemble a burned area emergency rehabilitation team as soon as practical. Please coordinate with and assist the team in making access to areas affected by the fire in a manner that does not compromise incident objectives or personnel safety.

16. The final fire package should follow the attached Northern Rockies Coordinating Group standard format. Any items that are missing or incomplete should be listed on a separate document.

Thanks, and be safe.

CATHY BARBOULETOS
Forest Supervisor,
Flathead National Forest

cc: Lisa Krueger, Malcolm Edwards, Dave
Marsh, Allen Chrisman, Carol Bienhold,

BRIAN MANNING
Stillwater Unit Manager and acting Libby
Unit Manager,
Department of Natural Resources &
Conservation